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Commission Rejects Any Suspicion Of CIA Involvement in JFK Death

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The Rockefeller commission yesterday rejected all hints and suspicions that the CIA or any of its agents had anything to do with the assassination of President Kennedy.

"Numerous allegations have been made that the CIA participated in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy," the commission said at the end of an 18-page rebuttal of such allegations. "On the basis of the staff's investigation, the commission concluded there was no credible evidence of any CIA involvement."

Taking the allegations one by one, the commission rebutted the suggestions that Watergate burglars E. Howard Hunt Jr. and Frank Sturgis were CIA employees at the time of the assassination, that they were in Dallas together on the same day, that they were found by police near the scene of the shooting and that Lee Harvey Oswald or Jack Ruby had CIA ties.

The commission also went point by point through the allegation that President Kennedy had been shot from behind and from in front, saying, like the Warren commission before it, that the President was killed by two bullets fired from the rear by a single gun.

"The commission believes there is no evidence to support the claim that President Kennedy was struck by a bullet fired from any position to his front, right front or right side," the commission said, "and that the motions of the President's head and body, following the shot that struck him in the head, are fully consistent with that shot having come from a point to his rear, above him and slightly to his right."

In response to the allegation that President Kennedy's head and body movements suggested that he was hit by a bullet from the rear and then a second bullet from in front, the commission disclosed that it had assembled a new panel of five experts to re-study motion pictures, autopsy photographs and X-rays, recovered bullet fragments and the clothing and back brace the President wore the day he was shot.

The panel was made up of five doctors, none of whom had served the Warren commission or the autopsy commission set up by former Attorney General Ramsey Clark seven years ago.

The only member of the Warren commission on the Rockefeller commission was

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David W. Belin, its executive director. He did not get involved in the re-study of President Kennedy's assassination, commission sources said.

Separately and unanimously, the five doctors said the violent backward and leftward motion of the president's upper body was not caused by the impact of a bullet coming from anywhere in front of him.

Three of the doctors said that such a motion was caused by a violent straightening and stiffening of the body "as a result of a seizure-like neuromuscular reaction to major damage inflicted to nerve centers in the brain."

One of the other two doctors said that experiments at Maryland's Edgewood Arsenal showed that goats shot through the brain experienced the same neuromuscular spasms.

The commission said that the Edgewood Arsenal's Dr. Alfred G. Olivier explained that a head wound like the one suffered by President Kennedy produces an "explosion" of tissue from where the bullet exits the head, causing a "jet effect" that almost instantly moves the head back in the direction from which the bullet came.

Dr. John K. Lattimer, a New York physician who has studied the assassination films and Xrays, told the commission that he agreed that the "jet effect" drove the President's head backward.

Lattimer testified to the commission that his own studies with the same kind of rifle and ammunition used by Lee Harvey Oswald supported the "jet effect" principle.

The commission said it also interviewed Michigan's Dr. E. Forrest Chapman, one of three physicians outside the Warren, Ramsey Clark and Rockefeller commissions to have studied the autopsy photographs and Xrays.

The Rockefeller commission said that Dr. Chapman said that if any assassins were firing at President Kennedy from in front "they must have been very poor shots because they didn't hit anything."

While it spent almost half the 18 pages in rebuttal of the "two-gun" theory, the commission also rejected the suggestions that Hunt and Sturgis were in Dallas on the day of the assassination, sent there by the CIA to kill Kennedy because the President had blamed the CIA for the Bay of Pigs failure.

The commission confirmed that Hunt was employed by the CIA in 1963, but denied that Sturgis was. The commission said it spoke to witnesses who testified that Hunt was in Washington and Sturgis in Miami on the day the President was killed.

Hunt and Sturgis never even met, the commission said, until almost 10 years after Kennedy's death. The commission knocked down the suggestion that Sturgis (whose given name was Frank Fiorini) took his adopted name from a character in a novel written by Hunt in 1949.

A search of court records in Norfolk, Va., showed that Sturgis took his adopted name in 1952 from his stepfather, whose name was Ralph Sturgis and who married Frank Sturgis' mother after her divorce from his father 15 years before.

The allegation that Hunt and Sturgis resembled two drifters found in a railroad car near the assassination scene was also rebutted by the Rockefeller commission.

It said that close examination of the two drifters showed that the one said to resemble Hunt was older and smaller than Hunt. The other one was thinner and taller than Sturgis, with thinning blond hair, while Sturgis had thick black hair.

The theory that the CIA had connections with Oswald and Ruby was dismissed by the Rockefeller commission, which concluded that these connections were no more than a series of unproven inferences.